THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) According to the State of Forest Report 1999, forest cover in the State of Kerala is 10323 Sq. Km and there has been a decrease of 11 Sq. Km of forest cover over the previous assessment. This has been primarily attributed to harvesting of eucalyptus and rubber plantations.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) and (g) The enquiry reveals that forest lands have been allotted by the State Government without prior approval under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The Central Government has directed the State Government for eviction of all encroachment on Forest lands. The State Government has appointed two Committees one to ascertain the exact extent of encroachment and other to oversee the eviction of all encroachments.

Japanese assistance to clean Yamuna

†*192. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Japan is going to provide financial assistance for Yamuna Action Plan; and

(b) if so, to what extent and by when?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Under the Yamuna Action Plan (YAP) Phase-I of Government, pollution abatement works have been taken up in 12 towns of Haryana and 8 towns of Uttar Pradesh besides Delhi. The approved cost of these works is Rs.711 crore against which an expenditure of which Rs. 655 crore has been incurred so far. A majority of the works of YAP Phase-I have been financed through financial assistance of Japanese Yen 17.77 billion from the Government of Japan. The present physical progress of the works is 95%. A sewage treatment capacity of 750 million litres per day(mld) has been created which comprises 322 mld in Haryana, 398 mld in Uttar Pradesh and 30 mld in Delhi. In addition Govt. of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi has also taken up works of pollution

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

abatement of river Yamuna in Delhi out of their plan funds.Under this component, the Government of NCT of Delhi has constructed sewage treatment plants at 17 locations with appurtenant works. The expenditure on these works during the Ninth Plan was Rs.617 crore and outlay for the year 2002-03 is Rs. 212 crore. The present installed capacity of sewage treatment in Delhi is 2200 mld which also includes 30 mld capacity created under Yamuna Action Plan (Phase-I) of Government. Apart from installation of sewage treatment plants, Government of NCT of Delhi has also taken up construction of 15 numbers of common effluent treatment plants to address the problems of industrial pollution from 21 industrial estates in Delhi.

A proposal for abatement of pollution of river Yamuna under YAP Phase-II has been prepared at an estimated cost of Rs. 2018 crore. This proposal has been posed for funding to Japan Bank of International Cooperation in March, 2002.

Upgradation of Regional Engineering Colleges

*193. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have recently upgraded some Regional Engineering Colleges (RECs) as National Institute of Technology (NITs);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the criteria on which the upgradation has been approved; and

(d) whether any agency has been put in place to monitor the functioning of these NITs and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (d) To strengthen the Regional Engineering Colleges system, Government of India constituted a High Powered Review Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. R.A. Mashelkar. The High Powered Committee recommended that the management of the Regional Engineering colleges (RECs) be restructured, their names be changed and they may be given the Deemed to be University status.On the basis of the recommendations of the Review Committee and the Empowered Committee appointed by the Government of India, in principle decision was taken to convert the RECs into National Institute of Technology